

# Bayelsa couple torture son to death over witchcraft

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## Samson Folarin

The police in Bayelsa State have started investigation into the alleged torture and death of a seven-year-old boy, Joshua, by his father, Zikeme Ideisy, and stepmother, Eunice Ideisy.

Joshua was alleged to have been tortured to death by the duo at their home in Yenagoa, the state capital.

*PUNCH Metro* gathered that Joshua had first been admitted in the children ward of the Federal Medical Centre, Yenagoa, on Sunday.

He was said to have sustained multiple injuries all over his body during what appeared like a routine torture.

The hospital management was said to have confirmed him dead and referred the case to the police at the Azikoro division, Yenagoa.

The two suspects were subsequently whisked away by the policemen, who detained them for interrogation.

A source told *PUNCH Metro* that Zikeme and his wife, Eunice, had taken Joshua from his grandmother, whom he had been living with since he was a baby.

The source said they later accused him of being a wizard and started inflicting injuries on him.

He said, "The boy was living with his grandmother before the man brought him to live with them. That was in November 2016.

"When they brought the child home, he didn't have any torture mark. It was within a few weeks that the boy stayed with them that the incident happened. He was beaten to death by the two of them over allegation that he was into witchcraft."

The FMC's Public Relations Officer, Ben Akpedi, confirmed that the child was brought to the hospital.

He said efforts by the hospital to make the suspects talk were abortive, as they continued to prevaricate.

He said, "The boy's father and a lady, who claimed to be the stepmother, brought him to the hospital yesterday (Sunday). On a close examination, our doctors found out that the child had passed on. There were a lot of bruises on him. We decided to conduct quick investigation and ask them some questions. But somehow, their answers were phoney.

"When we asked where they brought the child from, they said they came from across the bridge. We asked for their house address, they were not specific. We asked for a telephone number, but the number they gave us didn't go through. In their statements, they didn't say they were the ones that tortured the boy.

“We decided not to go further. We invited the security agents so that whatever might have happened to the child could be ascertained.

“The unfortunate thing is that the couple appeared to be young. Both of them are now with the police at the Azikoro division.”

A human rights activist and Executive Director of Project Alert, Mrs. Josephine Effah-Chukwuma, condemned the killing of Joshua.

Effah-Chukwuma said the torture and death of the victim was due to the failure of society.

She said, “This is nothing but a communal failure. Some of the scars on the victim’s body are old, meaning this had been ongoing for sometime without anybody raising the alarm. It is a big shame on us that a child in a community can be treated that way.

“Traditionally, they say it is one person that gives birth to a child, but it is the duty of a community to nurture and protect him. So, I’m wondering where we lost it that a child is being maltreated and we can’t even help him to cry out.

“There is no way that boy was beaten and killed in one day. He died gradually. He must have cried out and called for help, yet nobody came to his rescue. Nobody did anything. We all failed that child.”

The Police Public Relations Officer, Bayelsa State, ASP Butswat Asinim, confirmed the incident, saying investigations were ongoing.

He said, “We have a report about a seven-year-old boy that was admitted for injuries inflicted by his stepmother. He later died from the injuries. The stepmother and father have been arrested for their roles. The mother of the child has also shown up and they are all with the police.”